

District Health Department No. 4

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Flu versus COVID-19 vaccination clinics

District Health Department No. 4 has long been used to administering flu vaccines and scheduling large community flu clinics across its four-county service area. However, unlike flu clinics, DHD4's COVID-19 vaccination clinics look quite different due to the specific requirements of the vaccine, and the necessary safety measures for administration during the continued pandemic response.

To help the community understand how a COVID-19 vaccination clinic is different than a flu clinic, the health department is sharing the following key differences.

Flu vaccine and clinics

- A large quantity of vaccine is received at one time.
- With vaccine supply known, clinics and appointments can be scheduled well in advance.
- Walk-ins are welcome, clinic dates and locations are publicized.
- Only one dose is needed per client.
- Normal refrigerated storage with routine temperature monitoring is adequate for medicine in the vaccine to remain effective.

COVID-19 vaccine and clinics

- Vaccine is ordered and received on a weekly basis, and exact allocation received isn't known ahead of time.
- Appointments are scheduled once we know the exact number of doses received for that week. While we can schedule ahead for locations and staffing, we *cannot* and *will not* schedule appointments for vaccine we do not have access to.
- *No walk-ins.* We must schedule appointments for every client, and we are not currently publicizing the dates or locations for these clinics.
- To complete the full vaccination process, every client must receive two doses of either Pfizer or Moderna.
- To remain effective, the Pfizer vaccine requires specialized storage in a deep freezer and the Moderna vaccine requires more accessible freezer storage.
- The freezer holding the Pfizer vaccine requires strict procedures for opening freezer, placing the vaccine, and retrieving vaccine and the vaccine cannot be put back into the freezer once removed. It can then be stored for 5 days in monitored refrigerated storage.

"From planning to implementation, a flu and COVID-19 clinic are drastically different," said Denise Bryan, Health Officer for DHD4 which serves residents in Alpena, Cheboygan, Montmorency and Presque Isle counties. "There are different requirements for protection of staff, volunteers and anyone receiving the vaccine. There are differences in the logistics of the clinics, the number of clients we can serve, how the vaccine is handled, and so much more."

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